

# MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENCE SECURITY SURVEY FORM AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

San Diego Police Department  
Neighborhood Policing Resource Team  
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This paper contains reference material for the various elements of a multi-family residence security survey. The section numbers correspond to the areas of evaluation in the survey form that is included at the end of this paper. They are: (1) Doors and Gates, (2) Windows and Other Openings, (3) Lighting, (4) Utilities, (5) Landscaping, (6) Premises Identification, (7) Parking Garages and Lots, and (8) Property Condition. The letters correspond to the specific items assessed in the survey. Items that need attention should be checked and corrective measures identified from this material.

This material deals with the physical elements of the residence, not personal security practices at home. Tips on the latter are available in the Crime Prevention and Education section of the SDPD's website at [www.sandiego.gov/police](http://www.sandiego.gov/police).

You can also call the SDPD Community Relations Officer (CRO) in your area to arrange for a free residential security survey. SDPD division addresses and phone numbers are listed below.

## SDPD AREA STATIONS

Central	2501 Imperial Ave. SD 92102	(619) 744-9500
Eastern	9225 Aero Dr. SD 92123	(858) 495-7900
Mid-City	4310 Landis St. SD 92105	(619) 516-3000
Northeastern	13396 Salmon River Rd. SD 92129	(858) 538-8000
Northern	4275 Eastgate Mall SD 92037	(858) 552-1700
Northwestern	12592 El Camino Real SD 92130	(858) 523-7000
Southeastern	7222 Skyline Dr. SD 92114	(619) 527-3500
Southern	1120 27th St. SD 92154	(619) 424-0400
Western	5215 Gaines St. SD 92110	(619) 692-4800

## 1. DOORS AND GATES

### a. Single Door Construction

Single-swing wooden doors are either of solid or hollow core construction. All unit doors should be solid, at least 1-3/4 inches thick, and have a deadbolt lock.

### b. Deadbolt Locks

Doorknob locks offer no security. Burglars can easily defeat them. All exterior doors and interior doors to garages should have an additional high-quality deadbolt lock.

Deadbolt locks are of two basic types, single-and double-cylinder. The former has a thumb turn on the inside. The latter requires a key to lock or unlock the door from either side. It is not permitted in the Fire Code. Deadbolts should have the following characteristics:

- Throw of at least 1 inch.
- Free-spinning and tapered or angled outer edge of the cylinder guard. This makes it difficult for a burglar to twist off the lock.
- Solid brass, bronze, or steel exterior.
- Steel rods or bolts at least ¼-inch in diameter connecting the exterior of the lock to the inside part.
- 5-pin tumbler system locking mechanism.
- Changeable locking cores.

For rental units landlords are required to install and maintain an operable deadbolt lock on each main swinging entry door, and to install and maintain operable window security or locking devices for windows that are designed to be opened. See California Civil Code Sec. 1941.3 for these requirements and certain exceptions.

### c. Other Door Hardware

**Peepholes** with a wide-angle (180 deg) viewer should be installed in exterior doors to allow persons at the door to be identified without them knowing they are being observed.

**Hinges** should be located on the interior side. Doors with exterior hinges can be a problem if their pins can easily be removed. Then the door can be opened from the outside. Pins can be secured in various ways, depending on the construction of the door and frame. One way to secure pins in solid wood doors and frames is as follows:

- Drill a 1/2-inch deep hole in the side of the door just above the hinge.
- Insert a 1-inch screw or nail in the hole and leave ½ inch protruding.
- Close the door until the screw or nail contacts the frame.
- Drill a 1/2-inch deep hole in the frame at this point. The screw or nail will fit into this hole when the door is closed to secure the door.

**Strikes** are the metal plates that are attached to the doorframe or jamb to receive the latch or bolt throw. They should be of heavy-duty construction and installed with at least 4 screws that are 3 to 4 inches long and anchored securely into a wall stud. Otherwise, they become a weak link in door security.

### d. Sliding-Glass Doors

Exterior sliding-glass patio-type doors must be secured to prevent both horizontal and vertical movement. Deadbolt locks provide the greatest security. Less effective secondary locking devices include the following: a pin in the upper track that extends downward through the inner door frame and into the outer door frame, a thumbscrew-type lock mounted on the top or bottom track, a wooden or metal dowel placed snugly in the lower

track to prevent horizontal movement, and a metal strip or a few metal screws in the track above the door to prevent vertical movement.

#### **e. Entry Lobby Doors**

The doors to the lobbies of buildings with interior unit entrances should be locked at all times assuming no receptionist or security guard is on duty. Then residents would use keys or access cards to open them. Cards are preferred because they can only be used by the person possessing the card, a record can be kept of their use, they can be used on other gates and doors, they can be invalidated when reported lost or stolen, or when the resident leaves, and they cannot be duplicated and given to non-residents. All doors should have springs that close them securely after a person goes through.

#### **f. Entry Gates**

Pedestrian gates to the development should also be kept locked at all times. Residents would use keys or access cards to open them. Gates that are opened on the inside by a handle or knob should have shields that prevent a person from reaching in to open them. They should also be tall enough so that a person cannot reach over the top to open them. And if a gate has a beveled latch, it should be shielded so a person cannot insert a wire or bar between the frame and the gate and push in the latch. Gates that are opened on the inside by a push bar should be solid or have a solid metal or plastic shield on the inside of the gate that extends at least two feet above and below the push bar. The shield should be designed to prevent a person from opening the gate from the outside by looping a wire through the gate and pulling on the push bar, or reaching in and pushing the bar. All gates should be at least 6 feet high and have springs that close them securely after a person goes through.

#### **g. Visitor Entry**

A telephone-entry system should be installed outside one entry door or gate to enable residents to “buzz in” their visitors.

#### **h. Alarmed Exit Doors and Gates**

Measures are needed at all exit doors and gates to the street to prevent them from being propped open for reentry or unauthorized entry, but still open quickly from the inside in an emergency. These include audible alarms that also notify building security or management that the door is open, alarm-activated cameras, card-egress systems, and delayed-egress hardware. In the case of a fire, card-egress and delayed-egress systems would be overridden by the building fire alarm system.

#### **i. Emergency Police Access to Gated Developments or Secure Buildings**

Provisions should be made for emergency access by Police Department personnel if there will be times when no one will be present to admit them. Because patrol cars do not carry door or gate keys, the Department prefers access by a numerical keypad or telephone-entry system. An entry code should be provided to the Department for use at the entry gates or doors. It would be stored in the Department's computer system and transmitted in dispatch messages to officers who need to enter the property. The property manager should call the CRO in your area to have the code entered in the SDPD's PIN (Premises Information) file.

#### **j. Signs**

NO LOITERING signs should cite San Diego Municipal Code Sec. 52.30.2. NO TRESPASSING signs on private property should cite Cal. Penal Code Sec. 602.

If signs stating that security or surveillance cameras are installed are posted, and the cameras are not monitored all the time, the sign should also include that caveat. This is important in keeping people from having a false sense of security and expecting help in the event they are attacked.

## 2. WINDOWS AND OTHER OPENINGS

### a. Secondary Locking Devices

*Double-hung sash* windows can be secured by drilling a hole that angles downward through a top corner of the bottom window into the bottom corner of the top window on both sides of the window, and placing an eyebolt or nail in the hole to prevent the window from being opened.

*Louvre* windows are difficult to secure because the individual panes can easily be removed. This can be made more difficult by applying a two-part epoxy resin to glue the panes together. However, it is much better to replace this type of window with solid glass or some other type of ventilating window.

*Casement* windows can be secured with key-locking latches. Make sure that the protrusion on the window that the lock is attached to is made of steel and not worn, and that the window closes properly and is not bowed or warped.

*Sliding-glass* windows can be secured by the secondary locking devices described in Sec. 1.d for sliding-glass doors.

### b. Viewing Windows

Viewing windows in the door or near the lock side of entry doors should be made of laminated glass or a clear acrylic plastic. This will prevent a burglar from breaking a hole in the window and reaching in to unlock the door.

### c. Grilles and Bars

Horizontal and vertical bars provide excellent security as long as the retaining bolts cannot be removed from the outside. However, bars on windows in sleeping rooms and emergency escape or rescue windows in basements must meet Fire Code requirements for release mechanisms to permit escape from the inside in case of a fire.

### d. Other Openings

Pet doors, crawl spaces, ventilation windows, and other openings should also be secured. And make sure that window air conditioners are installed securely and cannot easily be removed from the outside.

Doors to storage rooms and outside sheds, hot water heater enclosures, electrical fuse boxes, etc. should be kept locked at all times. Padlocks need to withstand assaults with a large bolt cutter or pry bar. They should have the following characteristics:

- Hardened steel shackles at least 9/32 inches in diameter. Stainless steel or heavier shackles offer additional security.
- Double-locking mechanism at the fixed and movable ends (heel and toe).
- 5-pin tumbler.
- Key opening. Combination locks typically have very weak bodies.
- No readable key code numbers. Numbers on the lock should be recorded and eliminated.
- Key retention, which prevents the key from being removed when the lock is open. This reminds people to keep the lock closed so that someone cannot “borrow” it to have a key made.

It is even better to use a shielded (shrouded-shackle) padlock that is designed to protect against bolt cutters. Padlocks should be kept closed when not in use to prevent their removal.

### **3. LIGHTING**

#### **a. Exterior Lighting at Night**

Uniform exterior lighting is important, particularly where there are dark areas on the property. Floodlights installed under eaves can illuminate these areas and expose a person next to a building. Timers or photoelectric cells can be used to turn lights on at dusk and off at dawn. And motion sensors can be used to turn lights on when any motion is detected. Streetlights or lights from adjoining properties should not be relied on for lighting the property at night. Areas that need especially good lighting are doorways, parking lots, driveways, pathways, stairways, laundry room entrances, and cluster mailboxes.

It is also important that burnt-out bulbs are replaced promptly, wire covers be installed over lights to protect them from vandals, and lights directed so they don't shine into the eyes of passing motorists or police patrols

#### **b. Interior Lighting**

Good interior lighting is needed in building common areas, i.e., in hallways, stairwells, elevator lobbies, laundry rooms, etc.

### **4. UTILITIES**

#### **a. Electrical Power**

Because appliances, lights, and security systems work on electrical power it is important that measures be taken to prevent someone from disrupting the power. At a minimum, external circuit breakers should be installed in a sturdy box that is locked with a shielded padlock.

#### **b. Telephone Lines**

Telephone lines should also be secure, especially those that carry signals to alarm companies. External boxes that contain the lines should be sturdy and locked with a shielded padlock.

#### **c. Backflow Preventers**

Domestic water backflow preventers are being stolen for their brass and copper fittings. These devices should be protected from theft. The following measures should be considered: (1) painting it to make the metal is less valuable, (2) camouflaging it with fake rocks, (3) hiding it in a bush or hedge and painting it green, (4) enclosing it in a protective cage or box that is mounted securely to the ground with tamper-proof locks, and (5) installing a locking-cable system with shielded-shackle locks and a concrete foundation.

### **5. LANDSCAPING**

#### **a. Denying Hiding Places**

Well-trimmed landscaping deters criminals by denying hiding places and allowing good visibility on the property. Canopies of mature trees should be maintained at least 8 feet above the ground. Bushes should be trimmed to less than 3 feet except where privacy or environmental noise mitigation is a primary concern, or where higher plants would not block any windows, lighting, or provide hiding places. For example, higher bushes or trees with lower canopies could be planted next to a blank wall or the side of a home.

#### **b. Defensive Plants**

Locate plants with prickly leaves or thorns like bougainvillea and natal plum below windows and along fences as barriers to control access.

### **c. Tree Trimming**

Trees should be trimmed so that limbs do not provide access to roofs and second-story windows, or a means of getting over fences and walls.

## **6. PREMISES IDENTIFICATION**

### **a. Visible Address and Unit Numbers**

Good premises identification is needed to enable the police, fire, and other service providers to find a development and a particular unit quickly in an emergency. Address numbers must be on a contrasting background and located above the doorway or in a position where they are plainly visible and legible from either direction of approach from the street fronting the property. They must be at least 12 inches high on multiple-unit residential buildings and should be lighted so they can be seen at night. Numbers at least 6 inches high must be used to indicate a range of unit numbers in a building.

Where buildings are set back from the street or road fronting the property and address numbers on the buildings are not clearly identifiable from the street, address numbers shall also be posted on a monument sign at the street driveway serving the buildings.

### **b. Directory/Map at Entrance**

Multiple-unit housing developments should have an illuminated directory and map located on the right side of the entrances. The map must show the name of the development, all access roads and gates, private roads, building locations with addresses and unit numbers, and a YOU ARE HERE reference point. Directional signs should be located within the development. And individual building and unit numbers should be located where they are easy to see and read. The office location should also be clearly identified.

## **7. PARKING**

### **a. Multi-Vehicle Garages**

Parking garages are known to be likely settings for crime. Garages should have good lighting and visibility, gated vehicle entrances and exits, bars in ground-level openings, glossy white or light-colored walls and ceilings, columns instead of walls as interior structural elements, open exterior stairways and interior elevator lobbies, and if warranted, cameras and emergency phones.

Overhead or sliding gates should be installed to control both vehicle and pedestrian access. Residents would have to open them to enter and leave. Separate entry and exit gates that are one-vehicle wide are preferred because vehicles cannot exit and enter at the same time when a gate is open. Gates should also have an anti-tailgating feature that will start the gate closing as soon as a vehicle goes through.

If possible, entry and exit should be by individual keycards or proximity cards instead of remote clickers or numerical keypads. Cards are preferred because they cannot be reproduced and given to non-residents, a record can be kept of their use, they can be used on other gates and doors, and they can be invalidated when reported lost or stolen, or when the resident leaves. Also, cards unlike remote clickers would not be left in the vehicle for a thief to use to get a vehicle out of the garage. For developments with multiple gates, a resident's card would only open the gate to his or her parking area.

### **b. Carport Locations**

Carports should not be located under buildings because vehicles and people in them are completely hidden from view in the development. Parking under buildings should be in garages, never in open carports. Also, carports should not be located next to buildings because their roofs block views of vehicles and people in them from the upper floors of the buildings. Carports should be located along a perimeter wall or fence where their roofs would

not block views of the vehicles from the buildings. And carport roofs should be supported by columns, not by walls. This allows better visibility of the vehicles under them, especially from the ground level.

### **c. Parking Lots**

Parking lots are also known to be likely settings for crime. Lots should be fenced, gated, and well lighted.

### **d. Resident and Visitor Parking**

Individual parking spaces should be numbered so the exact location of vehicle thefts and break-ins can be reported. This will help in improving security, e.g., by installing additional lighting and surveillance systems. However, unit numbers should not be used because an empty space might indicate an empty unit.

Visitor parking spaces should be in a parking lot and clearly designated. Visitors should not be allowed to park in the garage.

### **e. Signs for Towing Unauthorized Vehicles**

Signs on private property prohibiting public parking (or stating that parking is for residents and visitors only) and indicating that unauthorized vehicles will be removed at the owner's expense should cite Cal. Vehicle Code Sec. 22658(a) and must contain the telephone number of the local traffic law enforcement agency. The SDPD number for towing impounds is (619) 531-2844. And as of January 1, 2007 the name and telephone number of each towing company that is a party to a written towing authorization agreement with the property owner or possessor must be added to the sign. The sign must be displayed, in plain view, at all entrances to the property. It must not be not less than 17 by 22 inches in size, with lettering not less than one inch in height. These sign requirements are specified in Sec. 22658(a)(1).

Signs stating that unauthorized vehicles parked in designated accessible spaces not displaying placards or special license plates issue for persons with disabilities will be towed away at the owners expense, must also contain the address where the towed vehicles may be reclaimed or the telephone number of the local traffic law enforcement agency. The SDPD number for towing impounds is (619) 531-2844. Other requirements for these signs are specified in California Vehicle Code Sec. 22511.8.

### **f. Individual Garages**

The best way for residents to prevent crimes involving their vehicles is to keep them in their garages. However, too often people use their garages for storage or other things and park their vehicles on their driveways or on the street where criminals have easy access to them. Although San Diego Municipal Code Sec. 142.0510(a) states that "Required *off-street parking spaces* ... shall be used only for parking operable vehicles."

### **g. Garage Door Hardware and Windows**

**Electric garage door openers** are generally effective in securing garage doors. A multi-frequency opener should be used to prevent the door from being opened by other radio signals.

**Hardened steel hinges, hasps, and padlocks** should be used to secure lifting garage doors. Padlock characteristics are listed in Sec. 2.d. Additional security can be provided by installing **cane bolts** or **sliding hasps** on the inside of the door. The door should also be mounted so that the bottom cannot be lifted up to enable someone to crawl in.

Windows should be made of unbreakable glass or plastic that a burglar cannot easily break and reach in to unlock the door. They should also provide one-way visibility from the inside so a burglar cannot see into the garage.

#### **d. Deadbolt Lock on Door to Unit Interior**

Where there is a door from the garage to the unit interior, it should also have a deadbolt lock.

### **8. PROPERTY CONDITION**

All elements of the development should be kept in good condition. Criminals are attracted to property in poor condition because it shows that the owners or residents don't care about it.

#### **a. No Graffiti**

Graffiti-resistant paint or anti-graffiti coatings should be used on the sides of the building and any other design features that could be vandalized. (The San Diego Park and Recreation Dept. specifies the use of VandlGuard Ten, a non-sacrificial anti-graffiti coating in a three-coat system by Rainguard International, or the equivalent on park furnishings and buildings.) Additional protection can be obtained by planting vines, bushes, etc. along walls and the sides of the buildings. They cover areas that might otherwise be vandalized.

Graffiti should be removed as soon as possible after it is found. This will discourage further vandalism. The graffiti should be covered with matching paint so a "canvas" is not left for the vandals. While prompt graffiti removal helps to deter further vandalism, any graffiti on the property should be photographed before it is painted over or otherwise removed. Also, pick up (without leaving fingerprints) and save discarded paint cans, etc. The photographs and any other evidence should be given to the investigating law enforcement officers.

Hardware or paint stores should be consulted regarding the best products for removing various types of graffiti from specific surfaces without damaging the surface. Extreme care should be used in applying special graffiti removal products like MEK (Methyl Ethyl Ketone) or "Graffiti Remover" on glass or unpainted surfaces.

#### **b. No Trash, Junk, Weeds, Inoperable Vehicles, Etc.**

Keep property free of trash, junk, weeds, leaves, dismantled or inoperative vehicles, and other things that indicate neglect. Also remove loose rocks and other objects that could be used to vandalize your property.

#### **c. Property in Good Repair**

Replace or repair broken windows, screens, lights, fences, and gate locks. Maintain the landscaping.

#### **d. Rules and Regulations Posted and Enforced**

The development's rules and regulations should be posted in plain view in the office and common area. They also need to be enforced to preserve a high quality of life in the development, especially with respect to noise, hours of permissible activities, and visitors

#### **e. Property Borders**

Well-built fences, walls, and gates are the first line of defense against criminals. The permissible heights and locations of various types of fences are specified in the San Diego Municipal Code. Sharp pointed fencing, i.e., fencing with spikes or a barbed- or concertina-wire topping, is not permitted in residential areas. Unless privacy and noise reduction are needed, open chain link or ornamental metal fences are preferred because they do not block visibility into the property and are less susceptible to graffiti. Chain link fencing should have its bottom secured with tension wire or galvanized pipe, or embedded in concrete to prevent it from being lifted up to enable a person to crawl in. Fences, walls, and gates should be at least 6 feet high.

## **f. Clean Alley**

Crime often occurs in alleys because they lack natural surveillance. The chances of crime in alleys can be reduced by the following measures:

- Lighted at night
- Yard walls and fences at least 6 feet high
- Anti-graffiti paint or coatings on walls, fences, and garage doors
- Locks on back-yard gates that cannot be opened by someone reaching through or over the gate
- Locks on garage doors
- No landscaping that obstructs clear lines of sight
- No alcoves that provide hiding places
- Signs prohibiting vehicle parking, trespassing, littering, etc.
- Visible home address numbers
- Free of trash, graffiti, etc.

## MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENCE SECURITY SURVEY FORM

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Check items that need attention and identify corrective measures in the space below.

### 1. DOORS AND GATES

- a. Solid-core construction unit doors
- b. Deadbolt locks
- c. Other door hardware (peepholes, hinges, etc.)
- d. Sliding-glass doors secured by locking device
- e. Entry-lobby doors self-closing and locking
- f. Entry gates self-closing and locking
- g. Telephone-entry system for visitors
- h. Alarmed exit doors and gates
- i. Keypad or telephone-entry system for emergency SDPD access
- j. No trespassing and no loitering signs

### 2. WINDOWS AND OTHER OPENINGS

- a. Secured by secondary locking devices
- b. Unbreakable viewing windows
- c. Grilles and bars
- d. Secure other openings and doors

### 3. LIGHTING

- a. No dark spots on doorways, pathways, parking lot, driveways, stairways, and other common areas
- b. Good lighting in building hallways, stairwells, elevator lobbies, etc.
- c. Secure electrical power

### 4. UTILITIES

- a. Electrical power
- b. Telephone lines
- c. Backflow preventers

### 5. LANDSCAPING

- a. No hiding places. Tree canopies trimmed to at least 8 ft. and shrubs trimmed to less than 3 ft.
- b. Defensive plants
- c. Trees trimmed to deny access to second story

### 6. PREMISES IDENTIFICATION

- a. Building address numbers at least 12-in. high visible from street and lighted at night
- b. Directory/map at main entrance showing paths, unit locations and numbers, and office location

### 7. PARKING

- a. Multi-vehicle garages gated and well-lighted
- b. Carports not under or next to buildings
- c. Parking lots fenced, gated, and well-lighted
- d. Resident's spaces numbered but not with unit numbers, and visitor spaces designated

- e. Signs for towing unauthorized vehicles
- f. Individual garages used for vehicles, not for storage or other uses
- g. Secure garage door hardware and unbreakable windows
- h. Deadbolt lock on door to unit interior

### 8. PROPERTY CONDITION

- a. No graffiti
- b. No trash, junk, weeds, inoperable vehicles, etc.
- c. No broken windows, fences, gates, etc.
- d. Rules and regulations posted in office and common area
- e. Property borders defined by fences, walls, gates, and landscaping
- f. Clean alley